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Curated by: Luigi Canali De Rossi

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IPTV vs. Internet Television: Key Differences

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What is the difference between IPTV, the Internet Protocol-based TV paradigm heralded by major telecom providers and large media groups (Microsoft included) and the Internet Television painted by the Long Tail phenomenon, Ourmedia, the Internet Archive, Brightcove, and the availability of amazing new technology opportunities such as faster and faster net connections, free unlimited storage space, BitTorrent, MPEG4 and powerful low-cost hardware and software production tools?

eye_on_screen_by_errans_350o.jpg
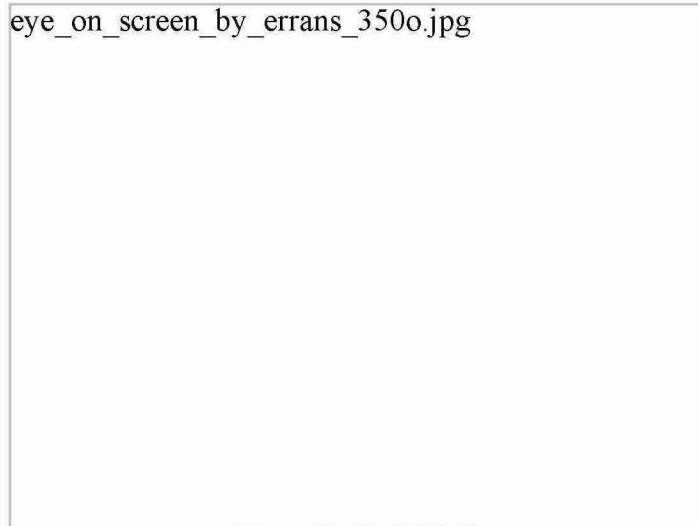
Photo credit: Alessio Vairetti

Are they two opposite and diverging forces or are they the different aspects of the same media phenomenon portrayed in different ways?

If you ask these questions around today, few people will be able to answer in a clear and articulate way. Even those executives working for would-be IPTV ventures would give no credit whatsoever to the idea that an alternative way of leveraging Internet strengths for the commercial delivery of video content exists. Most of the time they see only theirs.

So, **what are the key differences** between these two radically different approaches to distributing video content via IP and which the related-issues that make them important to me and you?

The choice, for those who can see it, appears to be between a universe of highly diversified and dynamic independent production and one dominated by secure dedicated private delivery networks distributing more traditional types of video-based content largely provided by Hollywood and other established big media conglomerates.

IPTV is represented by a profile of closed, proprietary TV systems such as those present today on cable services but delivered via IP-based secure channels representing a sharp increase in control of content distribution.

Internet Television is instead an open evolving framework in which a very large number of small and medium-sized video producers contribute highly innovative niche content alongside with offerings from more traditional retail and distribution channels.

Nonetheless key differences, being able to appreciate the true nature of these two models remains a challenging task for the uninitiated reader unless she starts to look a little deeper into the differentiating details.

What is IPTV

IPTV is not TV that is broadcast over the Internet.

"IPTV is generally funded and supported by large telecom providers who have undertaken the mission of creating a competitive replacement product for digital cable and satellite services." (Jeremy Allaire)

"While the "IP" in its name stands for Internet Protocol, that doesn't mean people will log onto their favorite Web page to access television programming. The IP refers to a method of sending information over a secure, tightly managed network that results in a superior entertainment experience."
(Source: Businessweeek - "The real meaning of IPTV")

IPTV is particularly good for the established media content production business, including Hollywood and all of the major television distribution networks on satellite and cable. IPTV allows these organizations to have total control of the content distributed and to greatly reduce opportunities for theft and piracy, which last year cost the cable industry $4.76 billion in unrealized revenue.

(Source: Businessweeek - "The real meaning of IPTV").

The way IPTV television is being conceived integrates multiple ways to monitor and record user choices, preferences and selections over time therefore appearing as an ideal platform on which to add personalized e-commerce options and more targeted advertising.

- **IP-TV is a carrier-led and controlled platform.** There is a physical carrier that has physical pipes and infrastructure that it operates and controls. The consumer interacts directly with that operator/carrier.

- As such **this is an end-to-end system or semi-closed network** (infrastructure is all within the carrier environment, and cannot be normally accessed to the Internet as a whole. Further to this, the deployment infrastructure and devices to access it are all managed and operated by the IP-TV carrier).

- IPTV is definitely **a massive connectivity infrastructure upgrade** to be deployed over a number of years, and which underlines major changes and upgrades to connectivity, transport and delivery devices both on the operator environment as well as on the consumer side.

- IPTV approach is a **fundamentally geographically-bound** approach. This is mainly due to the fact that the deployment infrastructure is based in regions and in neighborhoods connected to consumer premises (users homes). User experience is also bound to their living rooms and set-top boxes. Local regulations and policies further influence and limit IP-TV to be a strongly geographically-bound model.

- **IPTV will offer essentially the same product and programming offered by digital cable and satellite providers.** Similar on-demand and pay per view products probably with some extra integration with voice, and different pricing.

IPTV Issues

Will it be easy for the telecom companies to acquire, license and distribute existing commercial video content?

Can the telcos with little or no experience with the licensing of video content, hope to become smart players of this emerging industry?

For now this remains an open question:

"***It won't be easy.*** *Already, the entertainment industry is entwined in a web of complicated and often exclusive licensing deals, and getting the right content will be a challenge for the telcos.*"

This is what Bob Greene, senior vice president of advanced services for Starz Entertainment Group LLC told his audience a few days ago, at the 13th annual Symposium, "Next Generation Media Networks".

"*Movies are typically licensed on an exclusive basis for about eight or nine years, says, after which licensing is finally opened up to general broadcast rights.*" Greene also said that breaking into these exclusive relationships is the biggest barrier to those who want to start delivering video content over IP.

(Source: Lightreading IPTV vs. Me Too TV)

Reed Hasting, founder and CEO of Netflix, adds that "*the industry had reached a crucial juncture*", and where what we are left with it's a choice between an open and highly diversified grassroots Internet-based TV panorama vs. a highly-commercial, secure and controlled multiplicity of private networks modeled after traditional cable and satellite TV operations governed by major world telcos.

Unfortunately what telcos are doing, is dumping large amounts of money into creating IP-based versions of existing cable and satellite offerings, without any understanding of what the new emerging paradigm of Internet of Video, has really to offer.

A great model for marketing video and television-type content through secure and protected IP telecom networks could be modeled after what successfully done by NTT DoCoMo in Japan, where the telecom giant takes a cut of the overall sales and subscriptions revenues in exchange for providing new content providers with tools and services to market their content on their distribution network.

What is Internet Television

So, what is then the alternative open internet of video that Jeremy Allaire of Brightcove evangelizes about?

- Internet Television, is quite different in terms of the model for the consumer, the publisher and for the infrastructure used itself.

- In the Internet of Video, as Jeremy Allaire calls it, or Internet Television approach, the **model is open to any rights holder**, as it is based on the same publishing model that exists on the Web: **anyone can create an endpoint and publish that on a global basis.**

- Internet Television is **open to any rights holder** no matter whether this is an individual creating a video for a very small audience or a traditional publisher that offers linear cable channels.

- The Internet Television approach **the publisher has a direct communication channel to the consumer**.

  The content publisher is able to directly reach the consumers on the multiple devices independent of any specific carrier or operator. Internet Television is in fact an approach that also attempts to be as **device independent** as possible. Thanks to open standards and formats which have helped create this opportunity, Internet Television wants to be just as the web is today. Accessible from any type of computer and connection around the world..... and not physically tied to the user living room or set-top box.

- Internet Television will be **deeply integrated into the existing Internet user experience** and into the mechanisms that users use to access services, discover resources and share experiences in the Internet world, in the near future will merge with the world of video and television services seamlessly.

- Internet Television is **an outgrowth, not an overhaul**. Internet Television is able to ride on existing lowest common denominator infrastructure including broadband, ADSL, wi-fi, cable, satellite doesn't require new infrastructure to work or provide value to users.

- Internet Television uses a **global reach business model**, where video and television services that are offered in one geography can be accessed from any other global geography (as long as content distribution rights are in place).

- Internet Television **promises access to many new products and much broader range of programming** that we have been accustomed to retail video world and dramatically more control, as to when and where and how users can access that video/tv programming."

"*An open platform gives content providers control over the brand and customer relationship,*" says Jeremy Allaire of BrightCove.

This, he feels, will create **an explosion of niche content that people can access directly over open, IP-based systems**. "*Nearly every small niche can be economically supportable.*"

And also:

"Beyond looking at Internet Television as an ideal platform for marketing and distribution, it is interesting to think about how the Internet facilitates a distributed and collaborative environment for media production.

It won't surprise me to see *new "media collectives" modeled after open source projects that form together to put forth a particular view point - be it for entertainment or informational programs.*

Is this a missing piece to create a platform for citizen's media? "

But the question is: Which one would YOU want, and why?

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2009-01-26 22:00:06

well, the interent tv will be a greater boom, because it is more democratic. consider also the fact that you tube, a predecessor of the interet tv is already booming. go for the interent tv. Iptv will be just a little fad

2009-01-21 01:23:28

IPTV, how the registration going to be, how much ip address will allocate for the coming boom. then satellite and cable, terrestrial has to replace with IPTV or what?

2008-10-03 16:53:33

well internet tv will bring a great boom. wait for it. Those who can see the great curve of the youtube will understand what i mean.

2008-09-19 04:36:36

Hell, i am happy cause i will win a bet anyhow. Tv streaming is going to go over internet anyhow.i really hope that internet will consume television as we know it. Thanks

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2007-01-14 21:10:26

I am extremely angered at my current satellite tv provider. I am also angered at the lack of availability of any iptv services in the U.S. They are currently limited to a handful of cities. I currently live in an area of Denver called the Technology Center. You would think we would have it here, but no. The leaders of the big telcos are falling behind china and even the south americas and europe when it comes to emerging technologies. Look up www.opentv.com and see the possibilities iptv can offer. It will make you laugh at your current digital tv provider. The U.S. telcos are pathetic.

2006-10-10 16:12:29

What I don't see anywhere in this discussion is a distinction between streaming (or

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2006-05-22 09:38:59

FRESHIPTVNEWS.COM is an informative site for those who want to learn more about internet protocol television. it offers news and other updates on IPTV technology. Here's a quote:

"Internet Protocol Television describes a system where a digital television service is delivered to subscribing consumers using the Internet Protocol over a broadband connection..."
--http://freshiptvnews.com

read more and visit the site :D

2006-01-17 07:25:02

This article pointed out the key differences between IPTV and Internet-TV. Based on these points, I believe IPTV is leading toward a commercial Internet.
Firstly, IPTV will reduce a lot of security costs (especially for content protection) in audio/video information

delivery with a comprehensive and creditable mechanism within the network.

As a result, IPTV enables broadband network with security mechanisms have a competitive business model rather than an access channel for Internet service providers.

In addition, video-based service integration and related T-commerce on the commercial IPTV platform will be more meaningful, efficient and competitive, in comparison with current Internet e-business.

Regarding Internet TV, it will be a playground of nonprofit societies and organizations, as the complement of IPTV commercial society.

2006-01-12 01:19:31

Interesting to see somebody define the difference between IP TV and internet television (or will that become 'internet lvf' may be, as in live video feed?) If internet lvf takes off I would like a credit for originating the phrase ;-)

I think internet radio is a good indicator as to how internet television will be used, at least initially.

I have been working on encoding ordinary TV feeds (and any other home video source) to MPEG over IP over CAT 5 for multiroom distribution. It works a whole lot better than analogue switching. The usual benefits of digital apply, and using a router as the distribution switch is a natural.

In this way homes will be able to bring in direct video over IP (IP TV or internet television) and pipe it over their existing network.

What's the missing link? CAT 5 in the home, at build time. No matter how good 802.11n may be, I don't think the QoS will support more than one HDTV quality video stream at a time. And a lot of people don't like the idea of more 'radiation' in their home.

What can we do to persuade the property developers that it is worth their while to put CAT 5 in at build time? I have seen some homes in Florida with this, where the cable company has put it in. But in Europe the developers are not that enlightened, not yet anyway. I guess that's my mission for 2006.

All the best

Bob Barrett

2005-08-02 00:41:14

Anyone out there thinking that the current audio podcasting wave is a harbinger for internet television? Could RSS aggregators for video allow consumers the same menu driven choices for video podcasts?

Also, check out the progress that the University of Texas at Austin is making in launching their internet television project (www.actlab.tv) based on Onion Network's swarmcasting technology. If you are looking into content distribution and you are outside of the vertically integrated media conglomerates, this looks like the kind of mode you have to consider.

2005-08-02 00:34:44

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2005-06-22 11:26:26

Judging from the discussion at the IPTV World Forum Conference, in London earlier this year, most telcos were still thinking that video-on-demand through IPTV would generate the revenues they need to increase their ARPU. However, this is very unlikely to be the case. So those new IPTV service providers not only need to differentiate themselves from existing cable and satellite service providers, they also have to do it in a way that differentiates themselves from what is also possible through the web.

A type of walled garden offering might actually be appropriate for some people who get overwhelmed by what is on the web or simply don't want to waste their time searching for content. But, all this will need to be user driven not what IPTV service providers - feel users want. The TV set should be used for what it is best at doing - viewing video-rich content - which could be video-blogging, one-to-one video links with the rest of the family and even very local community-generated video content.

Developing the sustainable business models is still the big issue and this is something that I'm currently addressing and producing a number of "thinkpieces" that can be viewed at http://www.pjb.co.uk/thinkpieces.htm One covers "Beyond VOD – creating new business models through communities of interest" and another "Creating a Personal World (P-World) anywhere, anytime for just in time needs"

2005-06-09 19:34:05

Phil Smith of Complete Media System took a stab at defining both. He defined IPTV as "D1 TV delivered over IP to a consumer's TV set, often in a 'walled garden' scenario—an intra-ISP/telco/cable provider domain with limited or no open access to public Internet."

Source: http://tinyurl.com/dcyy9

2005-06-08 05:37:04

I believe that internet television is definitely going to be a big part of our future television consumption. I think that Brightcove has a great chance at making a big difference. When is their product coming out? Anyone know?

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Former Chief Technology Officer and company's primary technology evangelist at Macromedia, Jeremy Allaire is the man most can connect back to one technology product: ColdFusion. Jeremy Allaire - Chairman, Founder

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posted by **Robin Good** on **Saturday, June 4** 2005, updated on **Tuesday, May 5** 2015

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